

**Introduction to Special Education:
Making a Difference**

Seventh Edition

**Chapter 7
Emotional and Behavioral
Disorders**

Introduction to Special Education:
Making a Difference, 7th ed., ISBN 01305056020
Deborah Deutsch Smith

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Chapter Objectives

- Explain how ambiguous definitions can influence how we identify and support students with emotional or behavioral disorders.
- Identify academic and social characteristics of these students.
- Describe the causes of emotional or behavioral disorders.
- Identify strategies for improving learning outcomes for these students.
- List strategies for improving postsecondary outcomes for these students.

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Historical Context

- People with emotional or behavioral disorders have been recognized throughout time; however, their care and treatment was usually neither good nor humane.
- 1547: St. Mary of Bethlehem in London (also called Bedlam), the first institution for people with emotional or behavioral disorders, is established.
- 1792: Philippe Pinel, a French psychiatrist, orders humanitarian reform.
- 1700s–1800s: Benjamin Rush, the father of American psychiatry, proposes humane methods for caring for children with emotional or behavioral disorders.
- Late 1800s: The first public school class opens for children with emotional or behavioral disorders.

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History of the Field

- 1957: Leo Kanner's book *Child Psychiatry* brought the issue of services to forefront.
- 1960: Nicholas Hobbs of Vanderbilt University initiates Project Re-Ed.
- 1961: Eli Bower develops a definition of emotional disturbance that is the basis for the federal definition used today.
- 1964: Study is done on the effects of teacher attention on a preschooler's social interactions with his peers during play.
- 1999: IDEA'97 removes the term "serious" from this category.

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Challenges that EBD Present

- Students are difficult to teach and struggle behaviorally, socially, and academically.
- When compared to their general education peers, students with EBD experience the least success.
- Students with EBD have greater academic deficits than students with learning disabilities.
- Struggles continue in post-school settings.
 - Unemployment
 - Poor interpersonal relationships
 - Need for mental health services

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ED Defined

- Difficult to define due to its subjectivity
- The IDEA definition:
 - The condition persists and adversely affects educational performance.
 - An inability to learn exists that cannot be explained by factors relating to health, IQ, or sensory problems.
 - The condition results in poor interpersonal behaviors and a pervasive mood of depression or unhappiness.
 - The condition includes a tendency to develop physical symptoms related to fears.
- IDEA is criticized because it:
 - Leads to under-identification.
 - Narrowly interprets school performance as academic.
 - Emphasizes emotional problems.
 - Underemphasizes behavioral problems.

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EBD Defined

- National Mental Health and Special Education Coalition's definition:
 - The condition includes behavioral or emotional responses in school different from appropriate age, cultural, or ethnic norms.
 - School performance (academic, social, vocational, and personal skills) is affected adversely.
 - It is not temporary or an expected response.
 - The behavior is consistently exhibited in two different settings, at least one of which is school-related.
 - The condition is unresponsive to direct intervention in general education.
 - EBD may include schizophrenic disorders, affective disorders, anxiety disorders, or other sustained disorders of adjustment or conduct.

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Types of Emotional or Behavioral Disorders

- **Externalizing Behaviors**
 - Aggressive behaviors are expressed outwardly.
 - Examples include a high level of irritating behavior that is impulsive and distracting, or persistent aggression.
 - Three common problems:
 - Hyperactivity
 - Aggression
 - Delinquency
 - The condition may co-exist with ADHD.
- **Internalizing Behaviors**
 - Expressed by being socially withdrawn
 - Examples include:
 - Anorexia or bulimia
 - Depression
 - Anxiety
 - More common among girls
 - **Low Incidence**
 - DSM-IV-TR
 - Includes schizophrenia
 - Socially maladjusted

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Characteristics

- **Social skills**
 - Poor social relationships
 - Inability to cope effectively with expectations of social settings
 - Inappropriate expression of desires and needs
 - Lack of social competence
- **Delinquency**
 - Trouble with the law
- **Students with externalizing behavior disorders exhibit some of the following behaviors in excess:**
 - Tantrums
 - Noncompliance
 - Coercive behaviors
 - Aggression
 - Poor academic performance
- **Students with internalizing problems display these characteristics:**
 - Depression
 - Anxiety

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Prevalence

- **Children with EBD**
 - About 1% of the population
 - Estimates about actual prevalence: from 3 to 6%.
 - Disproportionately male
 - Asian American and Hispanic students underrepresented
 - African American students overrepresented

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Causes and Prevention

- **Causes**
 - Difficult to identify, and likely to be the result of multiple factors
 - Three general areas:
 - Biology
 - Home and community
 - School
- **Prevention**
 - Medical management
 - Reducing overrepresentation
 - School-based interventions:
 - Positive behavior support (PBS)
 - Functional behavioral assessments

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What Works

- **Behavior Management**
 - Point systems for appropriate behavior/task completion
- **Systematic Intervention Plan**
 - Hierarchy of tactics
- **Home-School Communication**
- **Peer Involvement**
- **Classroom Structure**
- **Supervised Free Periods**
- **Consistent Standards**

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Assessment Procedures

- Early Identification
- Identification of students who show "soft signs"
- Screening tool: *Systematic Screening for Behavior Disorders*
- Pre-referral
 - Reduce number of inappropriate referrals
 - Provide interventions for success in general education
- Identification
 - Range of assessments
- Evaluation
 - IEP goals evaluated by:
 - Curriculum-based assessment
 - Performance-based assessment
 - Statewide achievement tests to be administered with other students

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Early Intervention

- Benefits
 - Problem behavior does not go away, but will worsen without necessary supports.
 - Break the negative cycle of behavior.
 - Address problems early on.
 - Could avoid the need for more-intensive interventions later in life.
- Signals of Risk
 - Problem behaviors by age 3 and stable by age 8
 - Overt and covert antisocial activities
 - Problems occurring across settings
 - Over activity and inattentiveness
 - Frequent, extreme aggression

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Teaching Students with Emotional or Behavioral Disorders

- Students with EBD can participate in a variety of educational settings with appropriate accommodations.
- Strategies for improving reading skills
 - Peer Tutoring
 - Story Mapping
 - Modeling
 - Repeated readings
- Strategies for improving study skills
 - Mnemonics
 - Learning strategies

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Data-Based Practices: Functional Assessment-Based Interventions

- Interventions based on why behavior occurs
- Descriptive and experimental procedures used to identify:
 - Antecedent conditions that set the stage for behavior.
 - Consequences that continue behavior.
- All behaviors occur to either obtain or avoid:
 - Attention.
 - Activities or tasks.
 - Tangible or sensory conditions.
- Interventions include three parts:
 - Adjustments to the antecedent conditions.
 - Increases in the rate of reinforcement.
 - Removing reinforcement for the target behavior.
- Functional assessments may not be appropriate for high-impact behaviors that occur infrequently.

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Data-Based Practices: Functional Assessment-Based Interventions

- Benefits
 - Respectful process that involves teaching students more-appropriate behaviors
 - Do not include punishment.
 - Corporal punishment should never occur in school settings.
 - Punishing practices include: reprimands, loss of privileges, and withdrawal of attention.
- Behavioral strategies involved in intervention plans
 - Curricular adjustments
 - Specific praise
 - Reinforcements systems

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Technology

- MotivAider®
 - Relatively inexpensive device that students wear on belt or waistband
 - Works similar to a pager to remind or prompt students
 - Helps students to self-monitor behavior

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Transition to Adulthood

- Students with EBD have poor outcomes.
 - Unemployment or underemployment
 - High rate of divorce
 - Frequent need for mental-health services
 - Problems with interpersonal relationships
 - Problems with the law

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Collaboration

- Controversy exists over the balance of LRE and FAPE.
- Often, general education teachers are not equipped to deal with these students.
- Students need intensive direct instruction to learn correct social behaviors.
- Students rates of inclusion are low.
- Students have a right to receive appropriate and individual special education in spite of placement (general education class, special education class, separate school, residential group home, juvenile justice system, hospitals, or institutions).

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Collaboration with Related Service Providers

- Mental Health Providers
 - Wraparound services (coordination of services across many agencies) recognizes the importance of supporting students and families in trouble.
- PBS Team
 - Positive Behavior Support Teams can promote positive, inclusive practices that benefit students.
 - Use screening tools to identify students who have needs not being met by regular school practices.
 - Teams can provide students with targeted supports (support groups, homework clubs, *etc.*).

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Families

- Families are often blamed for their children's problems.
- Parent involvement is critical in achieving positive outcomes.
- Problems often associated with having a child with EBD include:
 - Increased stress.
 - Increased financial burden.
 - Social isolation.
 - Time and energy demands.
- Educators must establish open lines of communication.
- Families often need assistance in negotiating the health-care system.

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Challenge Questions

What educational placement options may be used for students with emotional or behavioral disorders?

How can these services be improved?

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